

Kashmir?" said Shah Khan, 22, who sells shirts and pants in the teeming alleys of Lal Chowk bazaar. "We are happy because at least his visit will bring some attention to our problems, but we wish he would come to Kashmir and see for himself. Then we would all tell him one thing: we want freedom."

But this message is highly unlikely to reach Clinton's ears or the Indian capital this week. On Sunday, about 50 Kashmiri independence activists were arrested and jailed as they tried to board buses that would take them to New Delhi for a protest rally near Parliament, where Clinton is scheduled to speak Wednesday.

In a brief interview in jail today, the group's leader Shabir Shah, 44, said they had been tear-gassed and dragged into police vans as they prepared to leave. He said the group, which seeks Kashmiri independence from India, had planned to stage a peaceful rally and a symbolic hunger strike.

"President Clinton says he wants to help ease tensions in the region, and he will be talking with India and Pakistan, but we wanted to tell him that it is futile until we Kashmiris are taken into account," Shah said.

Kashmir, which is divided between India and Pakistan, has been the major source of friction between the two neighbors and nuclear powers for a generation. Since the early 1990s, the Indian-occupied part has been the site of a violent conflict between anti-India insurgent groups and Indian security forces, which has cost tens of thousands of lives. Last summer, a 10-week border conflict in the Kargil mountains left hundreds dead.

Today's attack on the Sikhs seemed to represent an especially gruesome escalation of violence and attempt at ethnic cleansing in the Kashmir Valley, where Muslims dominate the population and the insurgency has become increasingly directed by Islamic groups based in Pakistan. The victims were separated from their families by unidentified gunmen who entered their village after dark and shot them.

In the past, Kashmiri insurgent groups have concentrated on military targets and have denounced terrorism against civilians. But in recent weeks, there have been a half-dozen attacks on Hindu truck drivers and on scattered villages of Kashmiri Pandits, or local Hindus, many of whom were violently driven from the region years ago. Now Sikhs, who have lived peaceably in northern Kashmir for years, appear to have become their latest target.

Clinton, who had called Kashmir "the most dangerous place in the world," has repeatedly expressed interest in helping to defuse the tensions and to nudge India and Pakistan back toward dialogue. But Indian authorities are adamantly opposed to any foreign intervention in the dispute, and have declared they will not resume talks with

Pakistan until it stops arming and training Kashmiri insurgents.

In interviews over the weekend, some Srinagar residents said they were skeptical that Clinton's talks with Indian leaders could make any difference. They said the United States was too concerned with bigger issues, such as trade and nuclear non-proliferation, to let Kashmir become an irritant to improving relations.

"Clinton is coming as a guest, so he won't want to embarrass his hosts. What he says in America about Kashmir may not be what he says here," said Masood Ahmed, 30, another shopkeeper in Lal Chowk. "He already knows that thousands of people have been killed in Kashmir, but he is only coming to see the Taj Mahal."

TOBACCO LEGISLATION

HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2000

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am introducing two bills today relating to the regulation of tobacco products.

Today the Supreme Court recognized that tobacco use "poses perhaps the single most significant threat to public health in the United States."

Unfortunately, the Court also ruled that Congress has not given the Food and Drug Administration explicit authority to regulate tobacco. So now Congress must act to deal with this enormous problem.

The first bill I am introducing is comprehensive legislation that represents what our country genuinely needs to reduce tobacco use by children. It explicitly authorizes the Food and Drug Administration to regulate tobacco products; it establishes an innovative and effective performance standard that gives the tobacco industry meaningful economic incentives to reduce the numbers of children that smoke; it establishes a national policy on environmental tobacco smoke; and it creates a new nationwide public education campaign on tobacco.

None of these measures alone are the answer to reducing tobacco use—but taken together, they will succeed in reducing the number of children who smoke. They are what we need to do in our battle against the deadly toll of tobacco, and will save millions of lives for generations to come.

I am concerned, however, that some may try to avoid acting on tobacco legislation by arguing there's not enough time in this session to deal with a comprehensive bill. And I'm

concerned that some may try to avoid dealing with this urgent issue by pretending that comprehensive legislation makes it more difficult to deal quickly with today's Supreme Court decision.

So I'm introducing a second bill that only deals with the question of FDA jurisdiction over tobacco. This legislation explicitly authorizes the FDA to regulate tobacco products, and does not address any of the other issues that Congress must confront in crafting effective national tobacco legislation.

The policies in both bills have been before Congress for many years. We've held years of hearings on these issues and tried to examine carefully every possible consequence of legislation. The time to act is now.

In 1998 I reached a comprehensive agreement with Congressman TOM BLILEY, the Chairman of the Commerce Committee, to reduce smoking by children. For reasons I still don't understand, the Republican leadership blocked that legislation from ever being considered.

Now, once again, the Republican leadership has the sole power to bring legislation to the floor. I hope they won't miss another opportunity to protect our children.

AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION,

Washington, DC, March 21, 2000.

Hon. HENRY A. WAXMAN,

U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE WAXMAN: The American Lung Association is pleased to endorse the Child Tobacco Use Prevention Act of 2000 and the FDA Tobacco Jurisdiction Act of 2000. These bills will grant explicit authority to the Food and Drug Administration to regulate tobacco products. Full, unfettered, FDA authority is needed to protect the public health and provide oversight on how tobacco products are manufactured, labeled, distributed, advertised, sold and marketed.

We strongly support the additional public health provisions included in the Child Tobacco Use Prevention Act. Company-specific performance standards to reduce child tobacco use, smokefree environments and tobacco prevention and education programs complement full FDA authority and greatly enhance the effort to reduce the disease and death caused by tobacco.

Congress must act quickly and pass this critical public health legislation this year. Full, unfettered FDA authority over tobacco products is the top priority for the American Lung Association. Thank you for your continued leadership to protect children from tobacco.

Sincerely,

JOHN R. GARRISON,
Chief Executive Officer.